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Treasurer Tavares Celebrates “Day of Portugal” at State House Ceremony, June 8

*In addition, three downtown businesses will display lights in red and green
in recognition of “Dia de Portugal.”*

PROVIDENCE, RI - General Treasurer Paul J. Tavares today announced that in recognition of the many contributions Portuguese Americans have made to the State of Rhode Island, the Day of Portugal will be celebrated on Thursday, June 8, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the State House during a ceremony and reception in the Rotunda. Portuguese American members of the General Assembly, including co-chairs Sen. M. Theresa Paiva-Weed and Rep. Paul Moura, will join Treasurer Tavares in the celebration, as well as the Dia de Portugal, Camoes e das Comunidades Portuguesas RI Committee.

In addition to the ceremony, the Westin Hotel, One Financial Plaza and 111 Westminster Street (aka “The Superman Building”) will display lights in red and green on their respective buildings in downtown Providence in recognition of the Day of Portugal from June 8 – June 13. “Dia de Portugal” commemorates the life of Louis de Camoes, Portugal’s national poet, who wrote the epic poem of the nation, known as “The Lusiads.” Festivities are traditionally celebrated on June 10, marking the anniversary of his death. At the request of Treasurer Tavares, the businesses have agreed to recognize this Portuguese national holiday.

“I thank these businesses for lighting their buildings in honor of this special day. As Portuguese Americans, we cherish our heritage and appreciate Rhode Island businesses taking part in passing on our culture and traditions to future generations,” said Treasurer Tavares. “Dia de Portugal celebrates our history and our culture and recognizes the contributions of the greatest figure in Portuguese literature,” said Treasurer Tavares.

The 16th century poet Camoes lived from 1524-1580 and is recognized as Portugal’s greatest writer. His epic poem, “The Lusiads” focuses on Portuguese history with an emphasis on the voyage of Vasco da Gama. The renowned Portuguese explorer, da Gama, was the first European to journey by sea to India in the 15th century, which was the catalyst for the development of the Portuguese Empire.